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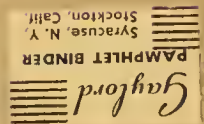
Jerningham

Stone henge



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STONE HENGE.

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EDWARD JERNINGHAM, Esq.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT was at the instance of the Gentleman to whom the following piece is inscribed, that it is now published; but the whole of the inscription, as it applies to himself or the Baronet his brother, was unseen by him until its presentation at the tribunal of the public. Nor has the general subject passed any other review, excepting one Gentleman beside.

STONE HENG E.

COME thou, to nature just, by truth design'd,
Who add'st the grace that ornaments the mind;
Whom the frail nymphs and vestals woes pourtray'd,
Virtue too thoughtless cloister'd or betray'd;
Pathetic drawn, without a trait austere;
This drops the pensive, that the contrite tear,
On lays where virtue beams a ray divine,
While gentle pity breathes through every line.
Now thine to bid th'ennobling passions rise,
And with kind pathos point them to their skies.
What tho' thy song the living virtues raise,
Aid me to pierce the shade of ancient days:

The creas loft, affist me to regain ;
 Thou, wrapt in fong amidst the fylvan reign :
 Where late the wafte, with dreary vifage frown'd,
 Where capt'ring beauty now afferts the ground.
 Where groves, glades, lawns, her fovereign fmiles obey,
 Yet for her reign their willing homage pay
 To Jerningham *, who bade thofe beeches rife,
 Stretch out their living arms and fan the fkies.
 There morn's firft minftrels in their fhades convene,
 There lift their rapturous anthem o'er the fcene ;
 There eve's plum'd poet glads the ftarry fphere,
 'Till night her poppies drops entranc'd to hear,
 Leave their congenial fong, come aid my lays;
 And pierce with me the fhade of ancient days.
 O come, and wrapt o'er fleeting time, difclofe
 How, and from whom, th' unperish'd dome arofe.
 Place the rough heroes round their lafting fane,
 Whofe date the antique sage hath fought in vain ;

* Sir William Jerningham, of Cottefey, in Norfolk.

Which braves the wreck of time and swift decay,
 That sweeps the labour'd domes of man away.
 Time, that from brass doth characters efface,
 And drops the cloud-hid turret to its base,
 Throws the symetric temple to the ground,
 Its site forgot, nor marble columns found:
 Its proud, its votive tablets long decay'd,
 With acts of gods and heroes there display'd ;
 Perish'd those gods, with their imputed line
 Of demi-gods, ensculptur'd round their shrine.
 Even science would a prouder claim assume,
 How vain ! to plan, to rear the immortal dome ;
 While this rude pile hath countless ages stood,
 The sap of time, and stemm'd oblivion's flood ;
 Till wild conjecture fancied powers has brought,
 To trace where science feels its vanquish'd thought ;
 That powers unseen had fix'd th'unweildy dome,
 Or the earth heav'd it fashion'd from her womb,
 Or Merlin's self, or greater sage unknown,
 Had call'd his fiends, and built the magic throne.

Even modern art, which every science owns,
 Confounded scans the ungovernable stones ;
 Knows not if nature form'd, or art had made,
 But quits the ponderous theme enwrap in shade.
 Myfterious circles ! from your gloom'd recefs,
 The prieft, perchance, the implicit train might blefs ;
 For furious Odin might obteft the fkies,
 And blefs a hecatomb for facrifice.
 Obfequious chiefs devote their herds to bleed,
 Their gods immortal feaft, the promis'd meed ;
 Or, foe to blood, fome Druid bade them spare
 The gazing hind and confcious bird of air :
 From thefe to thofe the foul tranfmitted goes,
 And an immortal change the fpirit knows.
 While from this fane, juft opening to the fkies,
 Their myftic rites and hid oblations rife,
 Still by what powers rais'd remains unflewn ;
 Nature's auguft retreats are better known.
 Rocks from a flender bafe flupendous rife,
 Pierce the grey dawn, and mingle with the fkies.

Caves, that like ancient domes sublime ascend,
 Whose length'ning shafts from awful roofs depend.
 'Midst fretted arches gothic spires protrude,
 There chanting echos fill the multitude.
 Or subterranean palace darts surprize ;
 As flaming tapers throw the minerals dyes,
 Voluted columns snatch the vivid light,
 And streaming radiance fascinates the sight.
 Here, here, great nature, from an obvious throne,
 Asserts a majesty confess'd her own.
 While baffled science can no powers descry,
 No line, no figures, Euclid's lore supply,
 To shew what rais'd this quarry from the ground,
 Or mortal art that swell'd the huge compound.
 Yet, rudely great, from human art it sprung,
 These founded rocks, with mortic'd rocks o'erhung.
 Yes; those can solve who saw the maniac train,
 Saw raging throngs, impell'd by frantic brain,
 Augusta's lawless crowds*, who fierce assail'd
 Her iron domes, and o'er those domes prevail'd.

* Rioters in London 1780.

Nor walls oppos'd, nor chain, nor bolt controul'd
 The madding fury, strength'ning as it roll'd.
 If rage tumultuous can such powers obtain,
 What may not warmth from sanction'd virtue gain?
 Where public acts the patriot voice requires,
 And fann'd the flame which emulation fires.
 Union of hands, with band to band conjoin'd,
 Prompt to one act the universal mind.
 Even patriot rapture nerves the listless frame,
 In nations leagu'd with violence for fame;
 Whose fervid effort can a purpose gain,
 Which cool inductive reason deem'd as vain.
 Even those brave Britons, tho' in time o'ercome,
 Who foil'd the force of Cæsar and of Rome,
 Who rush'd impetuous on their strong array,
 And struck the unconquer'd legions with dismay,
 Might in a nation consummate at length,
 What mocks our graphic skill and shackled strength;
 Might in a nation all its tribes convene,
 With hallow'd rites to sanctify the scene.

While

While thus I muse, my fancy wings its flight,
 Led by a ray which shoots the realm of night,
 To rescue from the oblivion of her reign
 The long lost race, that trod this sacred plain.
 A living host the abstracted thoughts supply,
 And peopled scenes are present to my eye.
 At the dawn's verge, see, gath'ring nations blend,
 As waves o'er waves at visions length extend!
 Disparting now, the countless train appears,
 And their strong hails in murmurs meet my ears.
 Conspicuous now, I see the varied train,
 The group'd procession length'ning o'er the plain.
 Hark ! in their front the attuning minstrels play,
 Commixt with Bards who troll the memory'd lay.
 In song canorous tell the warriors deed,
 The ancestors of sons they now precede.
 Lo, there those sons with tawny wolve-skins bound,
 With thongs from hides of bulls encompass'd round,
 The temper'd skin of seals a helmet spreads,
 The raven's plumage nodding o'er their heads.

Each tribe its Chief an eagle's plume allows,
 The hostile pounce projecting o'er his brows.
 With spears revers'd and daggers sheath'd they come,
 And file their silent squadrons round the dome.
 Suspended now, the adulatory strain,
 While flow approach the Druids awful train ;
 In long depending vest that sweeps the ground,
 From sacred flocks their earliest fleeces wound.
 Shorn in the due, the planetary hour,
 When moons propitious shone with sovereign pow'r.
 A hallow'd song the minstrel band record,
 Now paus'd the voice, now intermits the chord,
 Now the smote vane repeats its founding blows,
 And the full chorus its loud clarion throws.
 To Heav'n with violence they send the lay,
 And chant the Druids power that all obey.
 Reverent with rested spears the warriors greet,
 And spread their wolf-skin'd mantles for their feet ;
 The glare of fire soft temper'd in their eyes,
 And the fierce features lost in sober dies ;

The with foregone, that ask'd th' enfanguin'd plain,
 Now blest to consecrate the Druids' reign.
 To these succeed the sacerdotal band,
 With each a foodful charger borne in hand :
 The milk of ewes, when churn'd and when comprest,
 And cheering must from woodland fruits exprest;
 The sacharine juice, of forest-hives the spoil,
 And native pulse, and grain unrais'd by toil ;
 With fruits spontaneous, now but rarely found,
 Since earth hath felt the frequent culturing wound.
 Distinguish'd orders yet precede their rear,
 Chose from their tribes to celebrate the year.
 The painted males of many a varied hue,
 Specific of their tribe and genius too.
 Conforted follow families conjoin'd ;
 Their social wives with fruitage boughs entwin'd ;
 Inwreath'd with purple thyme fresh roses glow,
 The fragrant chaplet of the virgin's brow.
 Hark ! the burst anthem swells its notes around,
 And structur'd rocks grow vocal with the sound.

For now the Druids seek their inmost place,
 Recefs rever'd, forbid but to their race.
 Before the reft the regal Pontiff bore
 The golden bill, deriv'd from heav'n of yore;
 The exulting people mark the boon divine,
 And in full praise the adoring nations join;
 Their loud acclaim now fhakes the welkin round,
 And cloud-loft hills reverb'rate back the found.
 To their high prieft a reverent train fucceed,
 With facred mifletoe for rights decreed;
 The hallow'd parasites from oaks they drew,
 Cut by th' empyreal bill now borne to view.
 The druid filters rais'd the facred mound,
 Their mant'ling coifs with holy fillets bound.
 Each in her dexter hand an oak-branch rears,
 Whofe vifcid leaves the ethereal honey bears;
 Or boles of trees, when bleft, with fruit to rife,
 Should Heav'n propitious hearken from the fkies.
 The Pontiff fovereign now that fcite afcends,
 Where no unhallow'd glance its vifion bends;

A fanktion'd

A sanction'd few their ministry supply,
 Save these, unseen by every mortal eye.
 Fain would I raise the impenetrable veil,
 And bruit those mysteries which the shades conceal:
 Those mystic rites not Druids dare unfold,
 Enwrap'd from sight and never must be told.
 Enough—I see the long processions end,
 And through the exterior temple deep'ning blend.
 The most rever'd approach the sacred dome,
 Yet still behind leave honourable room.
 Order to order their due place obtain,
 'Till the last circle verges on the plain.
 There minstrels, bards, and choiristers surround,
 Not yet to bid the song emphatically found.
 Now to their sides the unbreath'd pipes are hung,
 No lay yet prompt, and every harp unstrung;
 The silent warriors in battalia drawn,
 Nor waves an ensign to the peopled lawn.
 Mark! hush as death the obsequious people wait,
 To learn the future blessings of their state.

Lo, from the sacred front the chief descends,
 And with his conclave thro' the temple bends.
 A monumental stone its circus holds,
 Whose front the far provincial plain unfolds.
 Thither he moves, while streamers wave in air,
 To bid the throng in order'd ranks repair.
 These in deep crescent wait the dread address,
 A sacred terror all their minds impress.
 Mark, how they Heav'n's great oracle revere,
 Half prostrate bend, and tremble while they hear!
 " Friends! Britons! subjects of this ancient state!
 " Hear Heaven's behest, with reverence of your fate!
 " The late atonement which your hands supplied;
 " Regains that boon your truant deeds denied.
 " Our God ador'd, now condescends to give
 " Rules for your conduct, and in him we live.
 " First, strict observance of my priests is due,
 " What Heav'n reveals to them, is taught to you;
 " Our sovereign rule, which yet extended runs
 " To you from wives, from servants, and from sons,

" Obedience,

“ Obedience, is the basis of our state,
 “ And who depart from that, incur our hate.
 “ And after death their spirits restless roam
 “ In birds, or beast of prey, that know no home ;
 “ While future ease awaits the obedient mind,
 “ In herds, or flocks, they sanctuary find.
 “ And such asylum, what your fathers know
 “ From you, your sons in reverence shall bestow.
 “ Watch well our state, nor let the stranger’s art
 “ Bewray your thoughts, nor steal upon the heart.
 “ No alien deign in mixture to embrace,
 “ But your pure blood transmit from race to race.
 “ Warriors ! revere that race, from whence you sprung,
 “ Whose living names the raptur’d bards have sung.
 “ On you, as once on them, our state depends—
 “ To die, transfers the life which never ends ;
 “ Alive to fame, you meet the dart of death,
 “ Nor heave with painful throes a feverish breath ;
 “ Our country’s glory boiling in your breast,
 “ And rapt in patriot fervour drop to rest.

“ But peace is ours ; its present joys improve,
 “ Devote to festive, to paternal love.
 “ Beyond our circus be your prowess shewn,
 “ There raise our nation's glory and your own.
 “ Your squadrons form, thesembling war to wage,
 “ And without bloodshed bid the battle rage.
 “ That should the spies from other states be near.
 “ They fix their future safety in their fear.
 “ My friends ! my children ! now your games renew ;
 “ The joy is mine that shall be felt by you.
 “ The teeming year shall its best fruits bestow ;
 “ Then gratitude shall point to whom you owe ;
 “ The power ador'd to us your weal consigns ;
 “ Receive my blessing, which each Druid joins ;”
 Silent they bow'd, no murmurs reach'd my ear,
 Yet still I list'ned, for I seem'd to hear.
 Then acclamations shook the Heaven's around,
 And frighted echo bellow'd at the sound.
 The foaring bird of heav'n forgot his flight,
 And earth receiv'd him instant from his height.

The choral clamour smote the inmost land,
 And the rocks rang impending o'er the strand.
 Fraternal chiefs for warlike scenes divide,
 With each an order'd battle by his side.
 Their painted ranks a recent splendour shews,
 And from their waist a checquer'd vestment flows.
 The shielding target on the shoulder flung,
 And by its side the quiver'd arrows hung.
 One hand a bow of woodland cugh suspends,
 And on the opponent side a blade depends.
 Chiefs on the flanks protrude the length'ning spear,
 And the prime chieftains on their cars appear,
 Those cars, erst scyth'd, had mown the battle down,
 What time an alien host had met their frown.
 But now the dancing plumes and gorgeous frame
 The chief denote, and province whence he came.
 Proudly the chiefs their steady feet sustain,
 And shake the lance with menace to the plain.
 Hark ! Bards and Minstrels now record the fame
 Of ancestors renown'd, from whence they came ;

Unconquer'd

Unconquer'd chieftains of primeval days,
 Honour's first sons, and heirs of deathless praise !
 From depth of caves they shaggy monsters drew,
 Or sped the dart that fiercer giants flew ;
 Or rush'd resileless where the battle bled ;
 Victory still follow'd as their chariots led.
 Yet while they sung their peerless fathers gone,
 They glaz'd their virtues living in the son.
 The chorus wide resound the flatt'ring lays,
 Honour's first sons, and heirs of deathless praise !
 Hark ! the bows twang, the whizzing shafts resound,
 Loud as a whirlwind rushing o'er the ground.
 See, o'er each front the arching arrows fly,
 And meeting shadows veil the beaming sky.
 Unbrac'd the bow, from flight succeeding flight,
 They poise the shield, and claim the closer fight.
 Sound the finote chords, the horns obsteperous blow,
 And with grasp'd sword they march to meet the foe.
 Here, there, the pikes their length'ning aid combine,
 To guard their own and break the opponent line.

Squadrons of cars their intervals contain,
 Where horses spurn impatient of the rein;
 Lest'ned the space, and van defying van,
 Shield rais'd to shield, and man oppos'd to man.
 With guarded swords the bucklers loud resound,
 Or reach their aim, tho' innocent to wound.
 Sudden by signal now a line's withdrawn,
 And flies promiscuous o'er the founding lawn.
 Alert their chiefs the flying bands restrain,
 And form anew upon the smoking plain.
 Instant prepar'd the conflict to renew,
 And check the apparent victors who pursue.
 These, too impetuous pressing on the flight,
 In broke array renew the unequal fight.
 Straight pikes and cars in force confederate join,
 By turns repell'd, and breaking thro' the line.
 See, other pikes and other chariots close,
 Order seems lost, and all immingled foes.
 See, frantic steeds no soothing can allay,
 With foaming rage they bear the car away.

No curb they feel, each threat'ning call repell'd,
 They throw their chieftains on the embattled field.
 See, more experienc'd chiefs their steeds restrain,
 And guide the chariots o'er the thundering plain.
 By turns receive the attack, by turns pursue,
 And make their horses rage subservient to their view.
 Now front, now wheel, recede, and then advance,
 With steadfast gaze to fend the missile lance.
 Turn the fierce courfers in their strong career,
 The javelin lift, or aim the deathful spear.
 Instant to earth now salient on their feet,
 Then with a flying vault resume their feat.
 In attitude the mortal dart to throw,
 Still shielded from the imaginary foe.
 Lo! now in cohorts, see, the chariots join,
 And rush with fury down the armed line.
 Alternate praise the rival squadrons crown'd,
 And echoing shouts of triumph roll'd around.
 Fast as the shadows flee their courfers sweep,
 Like chafing billows foaming o'er the deep;

Or as the torrent roars with downward force,
 Or falling clouds, tempestuous in their course,
 With rolling thunder, while the lightnings glance
 Gleams from their shield, and shoots along the lance.
 Fast rushes to my fate the dread career,
 I wish to fly, but gaze appall'd with fear.
 Nor can the trembling vision more portray ;
 For all the embattled scenery flies away ;
 The pomp of long-lost ages all withdrawn,
 And but their Temple crowns the naked lawn :
 Its visionary nations from it fled,
 And those fond scenes delirious fancy fled.
 Lo ! Sarum's spirey fane attracts my eyes,
 And Berk's blue hills in contact with the skies.
 Winton's and Dorset's downs in clouds are seen,
 And obvious glebes that float with living green.
 While yonder tract the whilom aspect bears,
 It bore, perchance, millenniums of years ;
 When countless generations roam'd its space,
 The vanquish'd myriads of the human race.

Whom

Whom like yon clouds, now ting'd with beams of light,
Flew on their hour, and vanish'd from the sight.

Ages like clouds shall catch the transient ray,
Be bright and fade, and drop from sight away.

Tho' men, tho' ages lapse, as wave to wave,
Swell, found, and proudly roll, 'till swallow'd in a grave ;
Shall from the abyfs, thro' pure alembics, flow
A vital effence from the mafs below.

The foul of man, ordain'd by heav'n to rife
Thro' truth, thro' love, thro' virtue, to the fkies,
The good man's anchor'd hope ; nor shall give way
When fame's no more, and clos'd the final day.

Naught of my waking vifion now remains,
But thefe heav'd catacombs that fwell the plains.
There flumber thofe, O Henge, who rais'd thy brow,
To look difdain on arts we boaft to know.

F I N I S.

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